

**State Of Arizona**

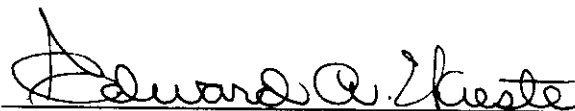
**ACTION PLAN**

**Prepared By**  
**The Arizona Department of Transportation**  
**in cooperation with**  
**The Federal Highway Administration**

 9-26-88

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## **FOREWORD**

The planning and decision-making process for federal-aid transportation facilities in Arizona includes the identification of public need, the consideration of funding, and the planning, development, and construction of appropriate transportation facilities.

This Action Plan outlines the processes utilized by the Arizona Department of Transportation in meeting its statutory responsibilities with regard to federal-aid highway projects in the state of Arizona.

Major projects such as new highways on new locations may require all of the process steps identified in the Action Plan. Less complex projects such as the improvement or reconstruction of existing facilities may require only selected steps of the process as applicable to the individual project. The Arizona Department of Transportation will use the least involved and most expeditious process appropriate for the particular highway project being developed.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1.0 GENERAL**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The Action Plan of the Arizona Department of Transportation was developed in accordance with federal regulations and through the cooperation and assistance of city, county, state and federal agencies and members of the general public involved or interested in transportation planning in Arizona.

#### **1.2 Purpose**

In general terms, the Action Plan sets forth the organizational structure of the Arizona Department of Transportation, the assignment of responsibilities within the organization, and the procedures followed by the Department in planning and developing highway projects.

The Action Plan identifies and discusses the decision-making process for proposed highway projects being advanced through the transportation planning and project development functions and describes how and when public and other agency participation is obtained and social, economic and environmental impact considerations are made in the decision-making process.

#### **1.3 Authority**

The Action Plan of the Arizona Department of Transportation was prepared pursuant to provisions of 23, CFR, Part 771. This Action Plan considers the organization and responsibilities of the Arizona Department of Transportation as established by Title 28 of Arizona Revised Statutes.

The provisions of the Action Plan shall apply to all highway projects that are financed in whole, or in part, with federal-aid. Certain provisions are also applicable to actions which require Federal Highway Administration Approval, even when federal-aid funds may not be involved.

A separate document entitled the "Action Plan for State-Funded Highway Projects" describes the functions and processes used by the Arizona Department of Transportation to administer the State Highway System program.

#### **1.4 Scope**

The Action Plan process of the Arizona Department of Transportation begins in the System Planning Stage of the Transportation Planning Process and extends through the Highway Development Process, culminating in the construction of the planned highway facility.

Provisions are included in the Action Plan for the monitoring of social, economic and environmental effects of selected completed highway facilities and the appropriate dissemination of state-of-the-art information resulting from the monitoring process.

### **1.5 INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER AGENCIES AND THE PUBLIC**

#### **1.5.1 General**

The Transportation Planning Process and the Highway Development Process of the Action Plan include opportunities for participation of the public and other agencies.

Proposed actions include publicly advertised meetings, forums, and/ or hearings or an offer to hold hearings as appropriate.

Agencies and the public are invited to submit their comments on the proposed project to the Arizona Department of Transportation through the public forums and public hearings during the Transportation Planning and the Highway Development processes.

Notices are appropriately published in local newspapers advising other agencies and the public as to the availability of the forums, hearings, and environmental documents, and how and where additional project information may be obtained.

Further, appropriate agencies are contacted regarding the proposed project during the preparation of the required corridor planning report and environmental assessment or impact statement.

Neighboring states are contacted by mail, telephone, or personal visit by the appropriate ADOT group(s) during the planning and development processes when Arizona highway projects will have an impact upon or be of interest to adjoining states.

Effort is made to obtain representation and participation of involved minority groups and individuals in the Transportation Planning and Highway Development Processes. Where forums or public hearings are conducted, minority groups are recognized and encouraged to participate.

#### **1.5.2 Public Information and Assistance**

Included in the organizational structure of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) is the Community Relations Office of the Director's staff.

The primary function of this office is to collect and to distribute to appropriate groups within the Department, transportation news articles and other public information of interest to ADOT and to disseminate to the news media and the public news and information regarding ADOT transportation planning studies, proposals, public forums and hearings, etc., of general interest to the public.

Persons desiring additional information regarding any ADOT transportation proposal or project may make inquiry at the Community Relations Office of the Arizona Department of Transportation, 206 South 17th Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85007.

If the nature of the desired information requires additional consideration, the Community Relations Office will forward the inquiry to the appropriate division or group in the Department for reply.

Interested persons may also make inquiry for transportation information at the appropriate ADOT highway district office within their respective area of the state or their State Transportation Board member.

#### **1.6 Transportation Planning Process**

Transportation planning in Arizona is performed at the local, regional and state levels. ADOT has the responsibility to assist in coordinating the transportation planning process at the various levels.

The Arizona Department of Transportation will develop a transportation plan for systems for which it has direct responsibility, and will assist and provide guidance in the coordination and development of transportation plans at the local and regional level.

#### **1.7 Responsibility for Implementation**

The Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation is responsible for executive implementation of the Action Plan.

Each ADOT Assistant Director is responsible for the administrative and operational implementation of the Action Plan within their respective Division.

##### **1.7.1 Revisions to the Action Plan**

The Action Plan of the Arizona Department of Transportation has been prepared in such manner as to be responsive to the ever-changing transportation needs and goals of the state.

Refinements of the transportation and highway planning process may be anticipated as experience and knowledge are gained through implementation of this Action Plan.

Minor revisions will be made to the Action plan as a matter of routine upon approval of the appropriate group or section head responsible for the functional area of change and the respective ADOT Assistant Director in charge of the involved Division or his designee.

Major revisions will be made to the Action Plan subject to approval of the FHWA, ADOT Assistant Director(s) of the involved Division(s) and the Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation or his designee.

### **1.8 Title VI Compliance**

The Arizona Department of Transportation maintains a current Title VI Compliance Plan under which it functions to ensure nondiscrimination regardless of race, creed, religion, sex, national origin or handicap to participants in the planning, location, design, right-of-way, construction and maintenance of state-owned transportation facilities.

The Arizona Department of Transportation Title VI Compliance Plan is updated annually and submitted to the Federal Highway Administration for approval. This compliance Plan is prepared and maintained to meet requirements of the following laws and regulations:

- A. Non-discrimination  
Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
- B. Title VI Compliance Plan  
Transmittal 7, FHWA Civil Rights Manual
- C. Social, Economic and Environmental Considerations  
Federal Aid Highway Act of 1970
- D. Title VI Assurances  
FHWA Requirement
- E. Right of Way Activities  
Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real  
Property Acquisitions Policies Act of  
1970 as amended; Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968
- F. Non-Discrimination on Basis of Sex  
Federal Aid Highway Act of 1973.

The ADOT Title VI Compliance Plan is on file with the Federal Highway Administration and is available to interested persons or groups at the Affirmative Action Office of ADOT.

### **1.9 Responsibilities**

#### **1.9.1 Arizona Department of Transportation**

The Arizona Department of Transportation is an entity of the Arizona State Government under legislative jurisdiction of the Arizona Legislature and under the executive jurisdiction of the Governor of Arizona. In accordance with Title 28 of Arizona Revised Statutes (as amended) the Arizona Department of Transportation is responsible for and shall:

- register motor vehicles and aircraft, license drivers, collect revenues, enforce motor vehicle and aviation statutes, and perform related functions.
- do multi-modal state transportation planning, cooperate and coordinate transportation planning with local governments and establish an annually-updated priority program of capital improvements for all transportation modes.
- design and construct transportation facilities in accordance with a priority plan and maintain and operate state highway, state airports, and state public transportation systems.



### **1.9.2 Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation**

The Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation is appointed by the Governor, with consent of the Arizona Senate, to head and direct the affairs of the Department. The Director is responsible for and shall:

- supervise and administer the overall activities of the Department, its divisions, and employees.
- appoint assistant directors for each of the divisions, which assistant directors shall be exempt from the state personnel system.
- prescribe such rules and regulations for the expenditure of all money in the state highway fund.
- pass upon projects for construction in cooperation with the United States, and negotiate and enter into contracts on behalf of the state with the United States for the cooperative construction and maintenance of federal-aid transit systems within the state.
- exercise such other powers and duties as are necessary to fully carry out the policies, activities, and duties of the Department.

The Director may provide technical transportation planning expertise to local governments when requested, coordinate local government transportation planning with regional and state transportation planning, and guide local transportation planning to assure compliance with federal requirements. Such planning authority shall not, however, preempt planning responsibilities and decisions of local government.

The Director shall develop a five-year Transportation Facilities Construction Program according to the policies established by the Transportation Board and shall appoint a Departmental Committee which is responsible to the Director to aid in the development of the Five-Year Transportation Facilities Construction Program.

### **1.9.3 State Transportation Board**

The Transportation Board of the Arizona Department of Transportation is composed of seven members. Six represent established geographical districts of the state and one serves as a member at large representing the entire state.

Each member is appointed by the Governor with the consent of the Arizona Senate to serve a six year term on the board.

With respect to highways, the Transportation Board shall:

- establish a complete system of state highway routes
- determine which state highway routes or portions thereof shall be accepted into the state highway system, and which state highway routes shall be improved; and
- establish, open, relocate, alter, vacate or abandon any portion of a state route or state highway.

The Transportation Board shall establish policies and the relative weights given to criteria to guide the development or modification of the five-year Transportation Facilities Construction Program, award all construction contracts for transportation facilities, and monitor the status of such construction projects.

### **1.9.4 Departmental Committee**

In compliance with statutory requirements the ADOT Director shall appoint a Departmental Committee which is responsible to the Director and shall be subject to the provisions of Title 38, Chapter 3, Article 3.1 of the Arizona Revised Statutes. The Departmental Committee shall:

Recommend priorities on transportation facilities construction projects to be constructed by the state which may include the following criteria:

- \* Sufficiency Rating and Safety Factors
- \* User benefits

- \* Continuity of Improvement
- \* Social Factors
- \* Land Use
- \* Aesthetic Factors
- \* Conservation Factors
- \* Life Expectancy
- \* Recreational Factors
- \* Availability of State and Federal Funds

The above criteria, along with any other relevant criteria developed by the Committee, shall be used for the development of priority recommendations for the construction and development of transportation facilities to be constructed by the state.

#### **1.10 The Divisions Of The Arizona Department Of Transportation**

Each of the ADOT Divisions is headed and managed by an Assistant Director appointed by the Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation.

Each Assistant Director is the executive administrative officer of his respective division and is responsible to the Director for fulfilling the responsibilities charged to the division by the Director. The Assistant Director of the Highways Division is by state statute also the State Engineer.

The Assistant Director of the Transportation Planning Division also serves as Assistant Director of the Public Transit Division.

##### **A. Highways Division**

The Highway Division is comprised of the Highway Development Group, the Highway Operations Group, the Traffic Engineering Section, General Operations Section, and the Arizona Transportation Research Center.

Administration of the Division is accomplished through the central headquarters offices of the Assistant Director, Highways Division, and his staff.

To effectively carry out the responsibilities of the Division, the state is separated into geographic Engineering Districts with each district being headed by a District Engineer supported by administrative, engineering, technical, and maintenance personnel as required. A map identifying the Engineering Districts is shown on the following page.

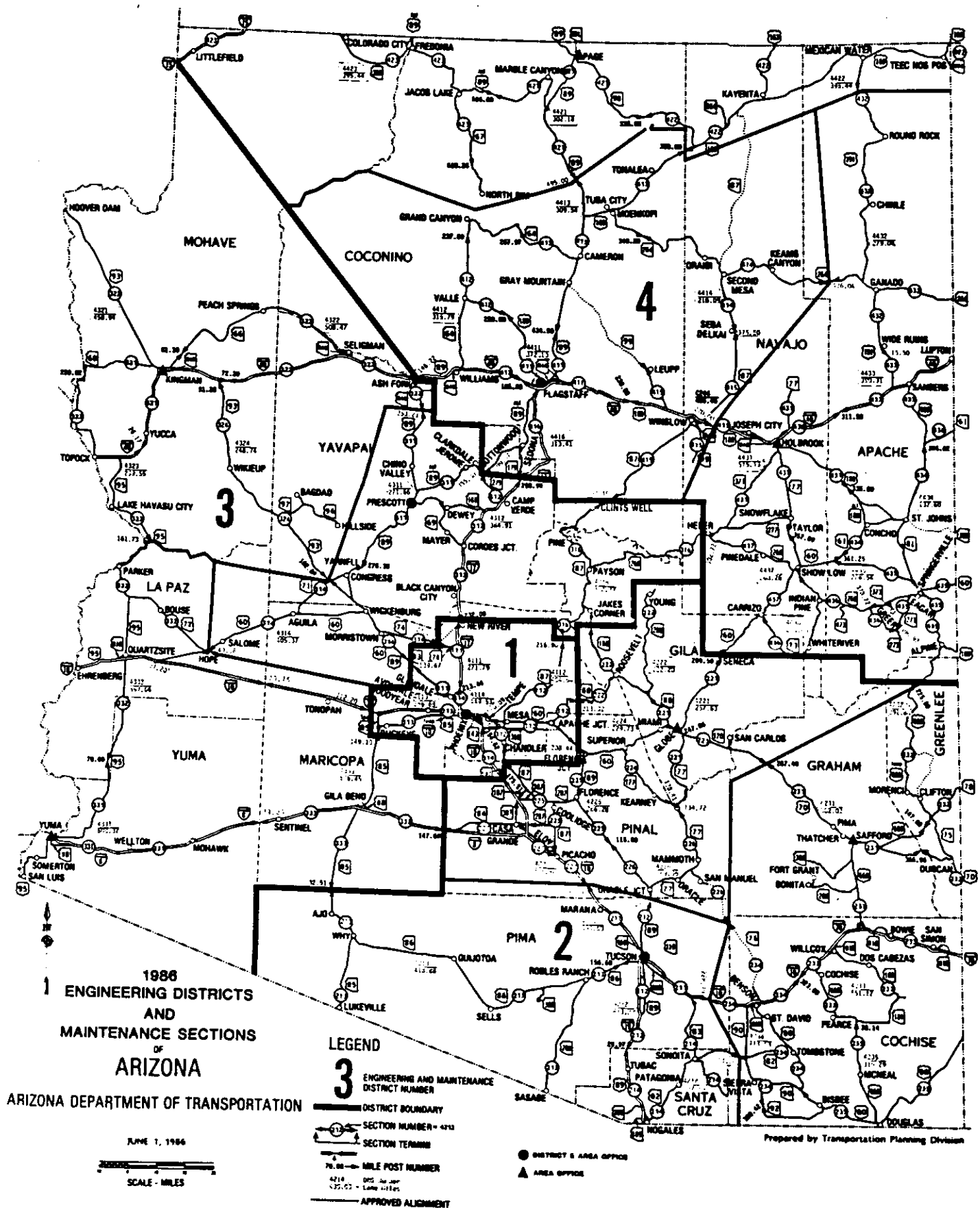
District engineers participate in highway planning and development processes outlined in this Action Plan, as appropriate, and are responsible for all state highway construction projects and roadway maintenance within their respective district. Each district engineer is also responsible for construction contract administration and project inspection on all local government federal-aid highway projects within his district.

The major responsibilities of the Highways Division are to locate, design, construct, and maintain highways and related facilities in the state highway system and to research, plan, and incorporate safety features into existing and proposed state highway facilities. The Assistant Director, Highways Division, is the executive administrative officer of the Division and is responsible for the administration of all highway affairs as authorized by the Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation.

In fulfilling its responsibilities, the Highways Division's functions include, but are not necessarily limited to the following activities:

- direct the preparation of all plans and specifications for work on state highways or state routes.
- advertise for competitive bids for work on state highways or state routes and, upon authorization of the Transportation Board, award and enter into contracts for work.
- direct supervision of all construction work on state highways and state routes, and take charge of maintenance and upkeep of such highways and routes.

# ENGINEERING DISTRICTS



- negotiate and award contracts to private consulting engineers or consulting engineering firms when deemed in the public interest by the Director and the Transportation Board for the performance of such engineering work or may be required to formulate and complete highway construction contracts.
- recommend state highway program policies and objectives and issue guidelines and procedural directives for carrying out the state highway programs;
- perform location studies and make recommendations on proposed state highway route location;
- perform highway design studies and make recommendations on proposed highway projects;
- identify and evaluate potential social, economic, and environmental impacts of proposed highway projects; and prepare and process appropriate environmental documents;
- review and advise on state highway elements of local, regional, and statewide transportation system plans including classifications, needs, and priorities;
- prepare materials reports and materials requirements specifications for highway construction and improvement functions;
- coordinate and administer utilities relocations with utility companies, for state highway corridors;

The functions of the Highways Division are related to the transportation planning and development processes contained in Chapters 2 and 3 of this Action Plan.

#### **B. Transportation Planning Division**

The Transportation Planning Division is comprised of the Strategic Planning Group and the Planning Services Group.

The three sections which make up the Strategic Planning Group are Advance Planning, Planning Administration, and Policy and Research.

Four sections comprise the Planning Services Group which include MAG-Transportation Planning Office, PAG-Transportation Planning Office, Planning Support, and Technical Planning Services.

To carry out its legislated mandate, the Transportation Planning Division assists in the development of effective transportation policies and goals. These policies and goals are related to the Department, the Transportation Board, state agencies, local governments, and the public. The goals and policies must also relate to emerging land use policies, energy conservation and allocation, and transportation regulation. Within this frame work, the Transportation Planning Division is primarily responsible for developing measureable and attainable objectives and for developing realistic time schedules for meeting these objectives.

#### **C. Administrative Services Division**

The functions of the Division are related indirectly to the transportation planning and highway development process of the Action Plan. The Administrative Services Division is service oriented and is comprised of the following groups: Finance Group, Information Systems, Procurement, and General Operation Support.

#### **D. Aeronautics Division**

The Aeronautics Division is comprised of Airport Development, Aircraft Registration, Grand Canyon Airport, Air Service Field inspections, and Administration. Most functions of the Aeronautics Division are not related to the Action Plan process. One area of interface includes the review and evaluation of proposed airport improvement projects under the jurisdiction of the Aeronautics Division by various units of the Highways Division and the Transportation Planning Division of ADOT.

#### **E. Motor Vehicle Division**

The Motor Vehicle division is comprised of the Administrative Staff, the Executive Hearing Section, the Investigative Section, and five groups consisting of Management Service, Field Services Administration, Driver Responsibility, Revenue Administration, and Integrated Records and Processing Administration.

The functions and responsibilities of the Motor Vehicle Division are not part of this Action Plan process.

**F. Public Transit Division**

The Public Transit Division is comprised of Rail Operations, Ride Sharing, State/Federal-Aid Programs, and Transit Program Assistance.

The functions and processes of the Public Transit Division are related to the State Transportation Plan (Step 3) and the Priority Programming Process (Steps 4 and 7) discussed in Chapter 2 of this Action Plan.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **2.0 The Transportation Planning Process**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the transportation planning process in Arizona, including answers to the following questions:

- a. What is transportation planning?
- b. Who conducts it and why?
- c. How is transportation planning conducted in Arizona?
- d. What are the products of the transportation planning process and how are they used?

Since the transportation planning process deals with all forms of transportation, the description is structured to emphasize the comprehensive nature of the process. It should also be stressed, in the beginning, that the transportation planning process in Arizona is continuing in nature, and that significant efforts are made by ADOT and others to provide coordination and assistance for, and to complement the transportation planning performed by agencies throughout the state.

Although this chapter focuses on the broader and more universal elements of the transportation planning process, it can be expected that Arizona will comply with more detailed procedures as may be required when participating in various federal transportation programs.

Transportation planning is the process of conducting a systematic analysis of transportation issues at the state, regional and local community level. It includes study of transportation systems, corridors and special issue problems, and preparation of capital investment programs for transportation improvements. Transportation planning deals with all forms of transportation facilities and services. As the name implies, transportation planning is future oriented, and it provides direction to the succeeding project development process.

In Arizona, responsibilities for transportation planning lie at the state level with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT); at the regional level with seven Councils of Governments (COGS); and at the local level with city or county government. Also, much of Arizona is either Indian land or federal lands over which the state has little control. The transportation planning in these areas is to a large extent conducted by the agency with jurisdiction over the land.

The Transportation planning process applied to state highway development is illustrated on the fold out flow chart at the end of this Action Plan. Each step is numbered on the flow chart and is referred to by the number in the narrative. This chart shows how the transportation planning process in use by ADOT relates to major state highway development.

##### **2.1.1 Interdisciplinary Approach for Transportation Planning**

Transportation is a critical element of the infrastructure supporting Arizona's growth and development. As such, transportation has a great impact on the state's social, economic, physical, and political environment. It is, therefore, imperative that the planning process incorporate interdisciplinary skills to assure that proper attention is given to the impacts of transportation decisions on all facets of the public.

Interdisciplinary skills are available at state, regional, and local government levels. Where special skills are not available in one organization, assistance is solicited from other sources. For example, Arizona's Councils of Governments were established to perform comprehensive planning on a regional basis. Being multi-purpose planning agencies, they have the inherent advantages of providing interdisciplinary skills to use in the transportation planning process. The COGS generally have substantial comprehensive planning staffs, and additionally, make considerable use of expertise available from consultants, local agencies, ADOT, and other state agencies.

Primary research tools and analytical skills needed for the performance of transportation planning at the state level are available in the areas of transportation inventories and forecasting; land use and population inventories and projections; simulation applications; presentation and graphic skills; social and environmental assessment; energy; economics; transportation engineering; and transportation planning and programming. Other supporting expertise, particularly in the areas of statistical analysis, intergovernmental relations and transportation policy review and analysis, are also essential and present.

### **2.1.2 Consideration of Alternative Transportation Actions and Their Impacts**

Arizona is committed to developing a transportation system which serves the needs of its citizens and at the same time minimizes any associated adverse impacts to the quality of living in the state. As a result, a vital component of the Arizona transportation planning process is the identification of transportation service and policy alternatives and assessing the impact of those alternatives on the social, physical, economic, and political environment. The impact analysis is an important element in the decision-making process for selection of the alternative to be implemented.

As might be expected, the degree of specificity in describing alternatives and assessing impacts increases as planning proceeds closer to the project development stage. In other words, the state transportation plan will identify alternative overall statewide transportation system components, general levels of service, impact on the overall statewide transportation system components, and impacts on the overall state economy. As individual transportation corridor and project analysis progresses from planning through location development to construction, the impacts are considered in greater and greater detail. For example, the effects on a specific property or neighborhood are considered in the highway project stage.

## **2.2 The Regional Planning Process**

### **2.2.1 The Councils of Governments**

By Governor's Executive Order, Arizona is divided into several planning and development districts for the purpose of performing and coordinating comprehensive planning on an area-wide or regional basis. Councils of Governments are established by the agreement of local governments within each of these planning areas for the purposes of carrying out the intent of the Executive Order.

The Arizona Department of Transportation recognizes and assists the Councils of Governments (COGS) as area-wide transportation planning agencies. Technical advisory assistance is provided to the non-metropolitan Councils of Governments through ADOT's local assistance program. Comprehensive, coordinated, and continuing transportation planning is federally mandated in urban areas that exceed 50,000 population (i.e., the Maricopa Association of Governments, Pima Association of Governments and Yuma Metropolitan areas, respectively). As such, these agencies are responsible for developing comprehensive transportation plans including both long range and system management (TSM) elements, the five-year transit plan, and transportation improvement programs (TIPS).

Specific transportation planning responsibilities of the Councils of Governments are outlined in their annual work programs which are approved at the local, state, and federal levels. Typical planning activities include the development of goals and objectives; issue review; data collection and analysis; forecasting needs and deficiencies; developing and selecting alternative plans, and performing special transportation studies. Public input and impact analysis are very important aspects of federally-funded programs and are an important COG planning responsibility.

### **2.2.2 The Regional Transportation System Plan (Step 1)**

The 1962 Federal Highway Act requires that all urban areas over 50,000 population must have a transportation plan based on a coordinated, comprehensive, continuing planning process. This requirement remains in effect and is the responsibility of the designated MPO. The plan must be reaffirmed each year by the Regional Council and is subjected to major review and reanalysis every few years.

The Transportation System Plan is Step 1 in the flow chart at the end of this Action Plan. This plan must take into account population and growth projections, land-use patterns and densities, income and economy, and travel habits and characteristics. The transportation plan must be consistent with the Regional Development Plan, the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality, and the Waste and Water Quality Plan.

In the selection of the plan, consideration should be given to all modes of travel, environmental evaluations, energy conservation, financial resources, and the needs and desires of the general public and the local agencies. Extensive public involvement through public forums, discussion, presentations, hearings, and other appropriate media are encouraged and actively pursued.

The Regional Transportation System Plan identifies general areas where new major facilities should be constructed, where additions should be made to the street system, the nature, size and coverage area of the transit system, and the amount of usage anticipated on each mode of travel. Cost estimates, implementation responsibilities, and phased development schedules may also be part of the plan.

### **2.2.3 Regional Transportation Priority Recommendations (Step 2)**

The Councils of Governments (COGS) working in concert with the local governments within their respective planning regions, establish priorities for federal-aid transportation projects within their region. The COGS are also encouraged to make priority recommendations for the construction and improvements of facilities on the state highway system.

The process described in Parts 2.4 (Step 4) and 2.7 (Step 7) enable the COGS to participate in the deliberations of the Priority Planning Committee and the State Transportation Board in the annual development and adoption of the ADOT Five-Year Construction Program.

## **2.3 State Transportation Plan (Step 3)**

### **2.3.1 Responsibilities**

ADOT conducts a continuing long-range (20 years or more) comprehensive transportation planning process which is periodically documented by a state transportation plan. The plan is produced through the building block approach with the analysis of specific issues and categories. Category level plans are maintained on a continuing basis for highways, aviation, railroads, and transit. Other category level plans are developed on an as-needed basis. Responsibility for overall management of the State Transportation Plan rests with the State Planning and Policy Section; however, specific issue and category level planning be assigned to other units within the Transportation Planning Division. In some cases, a team assembled from units within the Transportation Planning Division and other divisions having special expertise on the issue will be established, such as in the development of the State Highway Plan.

The Highways Division participates with the Transportation Planning Division in planning and decision-making regarding all highway planning issues; the Director and State Transportation Board approve highway policies and plans. Roles are established on the basis of authority, relationship to the subject matter, and nature of the planning activity.

### **2.3.2 Planning Alternatives and Impact Assessment**

A broad range of alternatives may be considered in the state planning process. These alternatives may include both policy alternatives and service level alternatives. A "do nothing" or "no change" alternative may be considered. The specific alternatives to be addressed in the development of the State Transportation Plan components is a function of the results obtained through planning studies and public participation received during the planning process.

Modal trade-offs are considered in development of the State Plan primarily through policy alternatives such as funding and preferential treatment. Specific intermodal service studies, such as service coordination, may also be incorporated in the state plan on an issue basis.



Criteria for evaluation of impacts, associated with the set of alternatives under consideration, are statewide in nature and include the following:

1. Safe, efficient, and effective transportation including modal integration and resource optimization
2. Achievement of growth and development goals
3. Major activity centers served
4. Land use compatibility
5. Social groups served
6. Economic consequences to state, communities, and population groups
7. System-wide air, noise, and other sensitive environmental impacts
8. Public support and political feasibility
9. Arizona life style
10. Coordination with local, regional, and other state plans

### **2.3.3 Products of the State Plan**

In the urban areas, the State Plan may largely reflect the Regional System Plan developed by the MPO in cooperation with ADOT. A careful review is made of this plan to determine which facilities are of statewide interest and which ones for which ADOT should not take the responsibility. If new corridors are involved, the State Transportation Board may commit ADOT's responsibility by adopting those corridors as "State Routes." The issue of new state routes may be initiated by the MPO, local agencies, ADOT staff, citizens or the Board members themselves.

### **2.3.4 Status and Performance Report**

The Status and Performance Report is not directly a part of the State Plan, but rather reflects the needs that are included in the plan. This study is performed every five years by ADOT as required by the state legislature. The purpose of the study is to identify the five- and ten-year transportation needs of Arizona and to evaluate the status and condition of transportation systems and analyze transportation needs. The report is performed under the direction of the State Planning and Policy Manager. It is an interdisciplinary team effort involving staff commitments from TPD as well as other ADOT divisions and local governments. Local governments cooperate with ADOT in preparing the report by providing data and information to ADOT and through participation on the Technical Advisory Committee is established by the legislature and is comprised of members from city and county Committee. The governments, representatives who are retired from the road building industry, and the Arizona Department of Transportation. The Technical Advisory Committee advises ADOT during the preparation of the report, sets standards, and reviews and approves the report.

In addition to identifying overall state transportation needs and performance, the report provides valuable technical information as an adjunct to the State Transportation Plan, transportation corridor studies, and the priority programming process.

### **2.3.5 Public Participation for the State Plan**

The State Transportation Plan is the broadest of all the system planning efforts and, therefore, requires the broadest public participation program.

Public involvement starts in the issues identification stage. ADOT conducts public workshops throughout the state, meets frequently with interest groups, individuals, and community leaders for the purpose of identifying the transportation problems facing Arizona, and receiving input on how to deal with those problems.

As statewide issues are identified and prioritized, they are inserted into the state plan development process as an individual issue or category-level study. At the beginning of these studies, the public principally affected by the studies are identified and offered the opportunity to participate in the study development. This generally involves informal advisory input from individuals and organizations for all studies and formal committee advisory input for some major-category plans. Each of the Councils of Governments is normally requested to provide representation and input for its area through state plan development advisory committees. Advisory input is solicited at critical points in the planning process, including establishing goals and objectives, identifying alternatives, and plan selection.

Opportunities for the public to be aware of and influence the State Transportation Plan development process may also occur through public dissemination of planning information via newsletters, news releases, technical reports, radio and television programs and public speeches. Public meetings are also a tool used by ADOT to solicit input for the state plan.

## **2.4 The Priority Programming Process (Step 4) (Also refer to Part 2.7, Step 7)**

The transportation systems planning process in ADOT culminates with the annual development of a five-year project-specific capital improvement program. The priority program is basically a short-range project timetable for facility and service investments.

The Priority Program reflects the general priority recommendations identified in the State Transportation Plan, Status and Performance Report, corridor and special planning studies. Additional priority program input is provided by ADOT Districts, management in the several ADOT Divisions, regional and local planning agencies including the COGs, and the general public.

In Step 4 of the flow chart, the State Transportation Board determines which corridors or facilities should proceed on through the planning process and allocates funds for the appropriate studies. These studies may be either the transportation planning corridor studies (Step 5) aimed at determining what type of facility to build or the designation of a preliminary corridor (Step 6) which defines generally where the facility will be built. In some cases, Steps 5 and 6 may proceed simultaneously. If the preliminary corridor is to be designated, then the Board may allocate some funds to acquire right-of-way to protect the corridor or to relieve bonafide "hardship cases."

Transportation facilities which are to progress from the planning phase into the project development phase are discussed in (Step 7). The detailed priority programming process outlined in Step 7 is generally also applicable to Step 4 for major transportation proposals such as new highways on new locations.

## **2.5 Transportation Corridor Planning Studies (Step 5)**

### **2.5.1 Responsibilities**

The Transportation Planning Division performs transportation corridor studies as part of the systems planning process. These studies focus on areas of state transportation network service identified in the State Plan and the Status and Performance Report and provide analysis on the effects of differing levels and types of transportation investments applied to these links. The studies conclude with recommendations for specific types of investments to be used in priority programming and the project development processes. In ADOT, the formal report which documents the study approach, analyses, and conclusions or recommendations is known as the Transportation Corridor Study Report. Transportation corridor studies may be initiated on the basis of recommendations in the state plan, at the direction of ADOT management, the State Transportation Board, or at the request of other agencies and the public. Funds for the larger corridor studies may be allocated by the Board through the priority programming process.

Advisory roles on transportation corridor plan findings are provided by ADOT Divisions and affected local jurisdictions. The plan approval role resides with the Director and State Transportation Board. The State Transportation Board is responsible for any approval actions involving adding or deleting routes on the state highway system. Often the study findings will require approval action by organizations outside ADOT. For example, a recommendation for improved bus service in a corridor would require approval of the transit regulatory body as well as the bus operator.

Staff responsibilities for the corridor studies lie primarily with the Transportation Planning Division. In most cases, a project director will be designated and persons with appropriate expertise will be assembled into an interdisciplinary team effort. The ADOT staffs assigned to the MPOs are heavily utilized for studies on the major urban corridors.

The Environmental Planning Services of the Highways Division provides specialty disciplines for social, environmental, and economic inventory and impact analysis in those areas in which Transportation Planning Division does not have expertise. Other technical and engineering expertise is also available from the Highways and Aeronautics Divisions to assist with identifying and evaluating alternatives dealing with those specific facility and service types. A principal advantage of involving other ADOT Divisions at the transportation study planning stage is to facilitate the transition from systems planning to project development. Local agency staff assistance may also be employed in conducting corridor studies.

The functions of Step 5 for state transportation facilities are generally performed by the Arizona Department of Transportation or its consultants. However, the Arizona Department of Transportation may permit a local government to conduct the functions of Step 5 for a state transportation facility in accordance with the Action Plan. In such event, the local government report(s) and recommendations for the state facility shall be presented to the Arizona Department of Transportation for the same approval process as reports prepared by ADOT or its consultants. Final decisions for state transportation facilities are the statutory responsibility of the Arizona Department of Transportation and the State Transportation Board as provided for under Title 28 of the Arizona Revised Statutes, as amended.

### **2.5.2 Corridor Study Tasks**

The scope of work and specific work tasks will vary from corridor to corridor depending upon the complexity of the issues and the history of the corridor.

However, in general, the following types of tasks or steps are appropriate for most corridors:

1. Identification of geographic area and travel movements to be served.
2. Estimates of traffic volume demand, trip purposes and lengths.
3. Based on current plans, project usage for trucks, buses, car pools, and other modes.
4. Identification of the problems and deficiencies with no action.
5. Identification of the appropriate transit and other TSM actions and determination of their effectiveness in relieving the problems and deficiencies.
6. Selection of alternative project concepts for evaluation purposes.
7. Evaluation of alternatives including consideration of service benefits, user costs, safety, energy consumption, air quality, sensitive environmental factors, land-use disruption and compatibility, impact on economic and development goals for the community, project costs, funding sources, local support, and political feasibility.
8. Development of recommendations and completion of the Corridor Study Report.

### **2.5.3 Corridor Study Products and Decisions**

The specific products and decisions vary from corridor to corridor. In general, the major decisions include the type of facility to be constructed, treatment of transit, cost estimates, funding sources, and priority recommendations to the State Transportation Board.

Other products of the study may include a preliminary determination of the number and type of travel lanes and general interchange locations. The geographic limits of the area within which a facility can satisfy the purpose of the corridor may also be determined. In addition, major impacts and benefits of the corridor may be more clearly defined and the degree of public and local agency support may be identified. This information may be used to determine the relative priority of this project to others in the state. The Board can consider this material in establishing the priority program and determining whether this corridor should move into location and design studies and eventually into construction.

If project costs and funding availability become a major issue, the Board and the ADOT Director may choose to delay final decision of the type of facility and timing for construction. The corridor study results may be used to solicit the required funding level from the legislature, the public, or other possible sources.

#### **2.5.4 Public Participation in Transportation Planning Corridor Studies**

Public involvement is sought in the conduct of transportation corridor plan studies. Identification of relevant local groups is accomplished through consultation with regional planning agencies and community leaders at the beginning of the study effort. Advisory committees may be established to represent public viewpoints throughout the course of the study. Input may also be solicited through meetings with interest groups, public meetings, and media advertisements.

#### **2.6 Designation of Preliminary Corridors (Step 6)**

When the planning process for a particular transportation facility is expected to span a long period of time between the Transportation Corridor Planning Study (Step 5) and Project Design (Step 10), the designation of a preliminary corridor may be necessary. The Step 6 process is an optional procedure which enables ADOT to preserve a corridor from development and to cooperatively facilitate orderly land-use planning by others along the corridor prior to detailed project location and design.

The ADOT Highways Division is responsible for conducting the Step 6 interdisciplinary evaluations with expertise and involvement, as appropriate for the particular corridor, from other ADOT divisions, public and private agencies and organizations, land developers, and the public.

The Step 6 process concludes with the identification of a staff-recommended preliminary corridor, usually of very general description, and the designation of a preliminary transportation corridor through adoption of a formal resolution by the State Transportation Board.

The adopted resolution is filed with the office of the appropriate county recorder as an official public notice of the intended transportation facility. The public may also be notified of the preliminary corridor designation through news releases to the media, or other appropriate means.

Agreement to cooperate in preservation of the designated preliminary transportation corridor is sought with agencies having jurisdiction along the corridor. The ADOT Highways Division works with developers and planning and zoning agencies to avoid encroachment upon the designated preliminary corridor. Where unavoidable encroachment is imminent, the integrity of the corridor may be preserved through advance acquisition for protective purposes as set forth in Step 8.

Designation of a preliminary corridor shall not preclude nor predetermine the selection of the actual and final highway location, which can only occur when precise information is developed in subsequent Steps 9 and 10 of the Highway Development Process, described in Chapter 3 of this Action Plan.

#### **2.7 The Priority Programming Process (Step 7 ) (Also refer to Part 2.4, Step 4)**

As stated in Part 2.4, the transportation systems planning process culminates with the annual development of a five-year project-specific capital improvement program. This program reflects the general priority recommendations identified in the State Transportation Plan, the Status and Performance Report, and corridor and special planning studies. Additional priority program input is provided by ADOT Districts. ADOT management, local and regional planning agencies including the Councils of Governments, and the general public.

Step 7 of the flow chart on page 59 is the point at which a project moves from the planning phase into the project development phase. Using the priority programming process, the Board selects those projects which are to proceed through location evaluation, design, full right-of-way acquisition and construction. The activities are funded on a year-to-year basis, but once the location evaluation starts, the project is expected to move through to construction even though construction might not be scheduled within the five-year program time frame.

Priority program development is an interdisciplinary effort drawing staff assistance from throughout the Transportation Planning Division as well as other ADOT divisions and other public sector agencies. For major new facilities in urban areas, the planning corridor studies (Step 5) provide relevant data into the priority programming process.

Statutory responsibility for developing the five-year program resides with the ADOT Director with assistance provided by the Priority Planning Committee. At the beginning of each fiscal year, the committee identifies and obtains State Transportation Board concurrence on major issues and policy directions affecting the five-year program. This provides direction to the Priority Planning Committee in making program recommendations.

Recommendations for projects to be included in the five-year program are identified through coordination between the ADOT District Engineers, ADOT headquarters staff, and the local and regional planning agencies. Initial project recommendations are submitted through the District Engineers to the Priority Planning Committee. An iterative process of review and refinement of proposed projects is thus developed for evaluation through the priority programming procedures.

The Priority Planning Committee prepares a tentative five-year program through the application of the priority criteria and policy. The ADOT Director then presents the tentative program to the State Transportation Board.

The tentative five-year program, upon acceptance by the State Transportation Board, is submitted to the ADOT districts, local and regional planning agencies, state and federal agencies as applicable, and is made available to the general public for review. By statute, public hearings are conducted by the State Transportation Board to receive public and agency input on the tentative five-year program.

After the public hearing the ADOT Five-Year Program is finalized by the Director with assistance provided by the Priority Planning Committee and is officially adopted by the State Transportation Board and filed with the Governor and the Secretary of State. The adopted ADOT Five-Year Program is distributed by the ADOT Director to each appropriate division Assistant Director for implementation.

This action concludes the Priority Programming Process and provides the schedule for development and construction of those projects contained in the five-year program. The Highway Development process is described in the following Chapter 3. Proposals in the five-year program for corridor studies, or protective or hardship right-of-way acquisition are processed in accordance with procedures discussed in Steps 4, 5, 6, and/or 8, as applicable, of this Action Plan Process.

## **2.8 Advance Acquisition of Right-of-Way (Step 8)**

When federal-aid funds for right-of-way are involved on a state highway project, advance right-of-way acquisition requires prior approval of the Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation and the Division Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration. On highway projects with federal-aid in some phase, but no federal-aid involved in right-of-way, the Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation may authorize advance acquisition. In either case, acquisition of the land may be authorized within the adopted preliminary corridor (Step 6) utilizing the funds allocated by the State Transportation Board through the Priority Program (Step 4). In all instances, advance acquisition should take place only if it is necessary to prevent significant development in the corridor, to relieve financial hardships on property owners, or if a property owner is suffering an undue hardship because his property is in the designated corridor.

In determining whether to purchase lands to prevent development, the Director, acting on the advice of the ADOT Chief Right-of-Way Agent, should determine that acquisition is the best method of preventing the development and that purchase of the land is a sound investment of public funds. In making the latter determination, the Director should take into account the increased cost due to the proposed development, the length of time before construction of the transportation project is projected to start, the disruptive effect of removing the development at a later date, and other factors as deemed appropriate.

For hardship cases, the health, physical condition, safety, welfare, and/or financial status of the property owner should be considered in determining the approval for advance acquisition.

The local jurisdictions may also purchase land for use as right-of-way for a state transportation facility. However, ADOT's acceptance of that land as part of the right-of-way can only be assured if ADOT gives approval to the local agency prior to their purchase. The local agencies are required to establish rigid procedures to identify zoning requests and building permit requests that may affect the corridor. If the local agency is unable to prevent actions which would adversely affect the integrity of the corridor, ADOT should be notified so that a decision whether to purchase the land can be made.

Advance right-of-way acquisition may take place until normal project acquisition begins (Step 11). This may cover a period of several months to several years.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **3.0 The Highway Development Process**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

##### **3.1.1 Systematic Interdisciplinary Approach**

The Highway Development Process of the ADOT Highways Division includes all planning, engineering, and administrative functions required to advance a highway project from the Transportation Planning Process to the Construction Stage.

The Process is accomplished through a systematic interdisciplinary approach involving the various operational units and services of the Highway Development Group, Traffic Engineering Section, Engineering Districts, Materials Services of the Highway Operations Group, other ADOT Divisions, other state and federal agencies, and special consulting and advisory organizations outside the Department, as required.

##### **3.1.2 Initiation of the Highway Development Process**

The ADOT Highway Process is initiated by the Assistant Director, Highways Division, in accordance with project priorities established in the ADOT Five-Year Transportation Construction Program as adopted annually by the State Transportation Board.

Transition from the Transportation Planning Process to the Highway Development Process is accomplished through documents developed by the Transportation Planning Division with previous interdisciplinary assistance from the Highways Division, as required. These documents may include Corridor Study Reports as well as other pertinent preliminary study reports.

The ADOT Five-Year Transportation Construction Program is used to develop the schedule of project priorities for implementation by the Highway Development Group of the Highways Division.

Initial activities of the project development process culminate in the preparation of the Project Assessment (PA). For most projects, the PA is initiated by the Advance Engineering Branch of ADOT Location Services, in consultation with the various Highway Division Sections of the Arizona Department of Transportation. When necessary, the PA for highly specialized projects (rest area, landscaping, railroad, signing, bridge repair etc.) are prepared by the Service having major responsibility over the project.

The primary purpose is to present an early definition of the scope of the project and its major features based on a field review and available data at this stage. The Project Assessment proceeds through a draft, initial, and final stage resulting in the Final Project Assessment includes comments received from ADOT sections and outside agencies. On federal-aid highway projects, the PA is finalized in agreement with FHWA.

A Project Determination form is forwarded with the Final PA for signatures, and when signed by the Deputy State Engineers of ADOT, the PA becomes the official document which defines and estimates the costs of the project. The Project Assessment process also helps to determine whether the preparation of a Design Concept Report is needed for the proposed project.

The final PA is presented at the scale of an executive summary, utilizing two plus pages of text formulated to address specific issues, which in addition to scope, includes construction costs, organizational unit involvement, development, and scheduling issues. The final Project Assessment serves as a reference to guide field surveys, mapping, field testing, and as a guide for the more detailed highway development process that follows.

Federal-aid highway and street projects by local governments (counties, cities, and towns) are processed in accordance with priority schedules established in the respective Councils of Government's priority programs.

##### **3.1.3 Secondary Road Plan**

The Secondary Road Plan (SRP) is an agreement entered into between the Federal Highway Administration and the Arizona Department of Transportation, in accordance with provisions of Title 23 USC, Section 117.

The SRP sets forth the the policies and procedures to be used by ADOT in the administration of projects financed with federal-aid highway funds on the federal-aid secondary system, and for selected projects classified as categorical exclusions with estimated costs of less than \$500,000. Interstate or Public Land projects are not administered under this agreement.

Under this plan, processing procedures and requirements for federal-aid local government and state highway projects are different from those utilized for federal-aid highway projects. ADOT is responsible for the planning, designing, utility relocating, awarding of contracts, constructing, and inspection of all projects. The Arizona Department of Transportation acts on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in reviewing and approving various elements of these projects throughout the project development process, except for environmental document approvals.

In some instances, local government agencies may be granted the authority to carry out all or part of the actions necessary to complete a project listed under this plan. In that event, the Local Government Services of ADOT ensures that the agency is in compliance with state and federal regulations and the provisions of the Secondary Road Plan.

FHWA retains the responsibility and obligation for making a final inspection of each project constructed under this Secondary Road Plan. All other federal-aid highway projects not being processed under the Secondary Road Plan are processed in accordance with the following procedures, unless otherwise stated.

### **3.2 Project Location (Step 9)**

#### **3.2.1 Overview**

The location function of step 9 applies to projects on substantially new alignment. The design evaluation function applies to major new construction or reconstruction projects.

The highway corridor evaluation process includes establishing highway alignments, preliminary right-of-way limits and the preparation of location, environmental, and design documentation which culminates in location and design concept approval for the project.

Close and continuing coordination is established between the Arizona Department of Transportation and other appropriate agencies during the project location process.

#### **3.2.2 Public Involvement**

Public Involvement occurs at any desired point(s) throughout the Highway Development Process and may include public forums, public hearings, workshops, news media announcements, newspaper advertisements and notices, or similar methods.

The Environmental Planning Services advertises and conducts public forums, workshops, or hearings for the proposed project, and provides a written report for each public forum held or a hearing transcript for each public hearing conducted.

Local governments advertise and conduct their own public involvement actions , when needed for local agency street and highway projects, with ADOT's assistance as appropriate. Local governments' actions essentially conform to ADOT's procedures.

#### **3.2.3 Location Concept Report**

A Location Concept Report is prepared for all proposed highway projects where the improvement is to be made substantially or totally on a new alignment.

The ADOT Location Section is responsible for making the location evaluation to determine the most practicable alignment. For state projects, this is accomplished through interdisciplinary analysis of the project based on data resulting from the Transportation Planning Process, the environmental evaluation, and examination of aerial photography, field examination, compilation of new topographic maps on which to define alignments, major utilities, preliminary materials information, ground surveys, and other measures as appropriate. Location Concept Reports may also be prepared by contracts with consultant firms.



When required for local government federal-aid projects, Location Concept Reports are prepared by the engineering or planning unit of the local agency or may be prepared by a consulting firm for the local agency.

### **3.3. Design Concept Report**

A Design Concept Report (DCR) is prepared by the ADOT Location Section in conjunction with other ADOT units, for the proposed project to determine the appropriate major design features required to meet the transportation demand for the facility being planned. Design Concept Reports may also be prepared by a contracting consultant firm.

When required for local government, federal-aid highway projects Design Concept Reports are prepared by the engineering or planning unit of the local agency or may be prepared by a consulting firm for local agency.

The Design Concept Report contains, as appropriate, the following information:

- title page;
- table of contents;
- list of figures;
- introduction which will include: forward, authorization, procedural requirements, characteristics of the corridor, description of the project;
- traffic data;
- major design features which will include: design controls, horizontal alignment, vertical alignment, access control, right-of-way, drainage requirements, structure requirements, interchanges, grade separations, etc.;
- alternates considered, including the do-nothing alternate;
- brief generalized description of social, economic and environmental considerations;
- public involvement; and
- appendixes to include: typical section, project plan sheets (aerial), project profile, standards, etc.

Each state Design Concept Report is subject to the approval of the Plans Engineer, Highway Plans Services, and the Assistant State Engineer, Design Section, Highway Development Group.

Design Concept Reports for local government federal-aid highway projects are subject to the approval of the authorized person(s) within the local agency prior to being submitted to ADOT for final approval.

Final ADOT review and approval of Local Government Design Concept Reports is the responsibility of the Transportation Engineer Supervisor, Local Government Services, Urban Highway Section of the Highway Development Group.

The approved Design Concept Report is distributed to involved interdisciplinary units involved in the Highway Development Process and is sent to the Federal Highway Administration for reference when federal project design approval is to be obtained.

### **3.4 Environmental Analysis**

Under the direction of ADOT's Environmental Planning Services, an appropriate environmental analysis is conducted for all proposed federal aid, state highway projects. The environmental process to be followed is determined by the type and nature of the specific action and must comply with all applicable environmental laws and regulations.

The Environmental Analysis for state highway projects is prepared by ADOT's Environmental Planning Services. When required for local government federal-aid highway projects, environmental analysis are prepared under the direction of the engineering or planning unit of the local agency in consultation with the Federal Highway Administration and the Arizona Department of Transportation.

The evaluation analysis is interdisciplinary in nature and includes professional services as necessary from units and groups within ADOT and the local agency, other governmental agencies, consultants, and the public where appropriate.

#### **3.4.1 Environmental Determinations**

The Environmental Planning Services of ADOT prepares written recommendations for each federal-aid highway project with regard to the following:

A) Class I: Actions that are likely to cause significant impacts on the environment. The preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is required for this class of projects.

B) Class II: Actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the environment. This class of actions are Categorical Exclusions and normally do not require an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement.

C) Class III: All actions that are not Class I or II are Class III. This class of actions require the preparation of an Environmental Assessment to determine which aspects of the proposed action might have social, economic, or environmental impacts and eventually to determine the appropriate environmental document required.

The environmental determination and the accompanying recommendations are subject to the approval of the Manager of Environmental Planning Services and the Federal Highway Administration.

The approved environmental document is distributed through ADOT Environmental Planning Services to appropriate local government and ADOT units involved in the Highway Development Process of the project, and is made available for public inspection at appropriate offices.

#### **3.5 Categorical Exclusion Determination**

In accordance with 23 CFR Part 771, Categorical Exclusion actions are separated into two groups. The first group is a fixed list of actions which do not require further National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation.

The second group includes actions which require documentation on a case-by-case basis to demonstrate that criteria for Categorical Exclusions (CE) are satisfied, and that significant environmental effects will not result.

##### **3.5.1 Categorical Exclusion (CE) Examples (See appendix for complete list)**

A) **Group One:** No National Environmental Policy Act documentation is required. Examples of such actions include but are not limited to:

- activities which do not involve or lead directly to construction such as planning and technical studies.
- approval of utility installations along or across a transportation facility.
- installation of noise barriers.
- landscaping
- installation of fencing, signs and pavement markings.
- improvement to existing rest areas and truck weigh stations.

B) **Group Two:** documentation is requested on a case-by-case basis. Examples of such actions include, but are not limited to:

- modernization of a highway by resurfacing, restoration reconstruction, rehabilitation, adding shoulders or adding auxiliary lanes.

- Highway safety or traffic operations improvement projects.
- bridge rehabilitation, reconstruction or replacement.
- construction of new truck weigh stations or rest areas.
- approval for changes in access control.
- acquisition of land for hardship or protective purposes.

### **3.5.2 Preparation**

#### **A. Group One**

On state federal-aid highway projects, the Categorical Exclusion (CE) is prepared under the direction of ADOT's Environmental Planning Services. Projects fitting into this group have an advance approval status, automatically qualify as CE's and require no NEPA documentation.

Once the CE Determination is made by the Environmental Planning Services of ADOT, a letter will be sent to the Federal Highway Administration requesting concurrence that the project is in Group One.

On a local government federal-aid highway project, the CE Determination is prepared by ADOT's Environmental Planning Services (EPS), after the local agency submits the Design Concept Report. EPS will send a letter to the Federal Highway Administration for their concurrence.

The Categorical Exclusion determination and the FHWA concurrence with it are distributed by Environmental Planning Services to interdisciplinary units involved in the ADOT Highway Development Process and to applicable public agencies.

#### **B. Group Two**

On state federal-aid highway projects, the Categorical Exclusion is prepared under the direction of ADOT's Environmental Planning Services, in consultation with the Federal Highway Administration and other appropriate state and federal agencies.

On a local government federal-aid highway project, the CE Determination is prepared by ADOT's Environmental Planning Services, after the local agency submits the Design Concept Report. EPS will transmit a letter and supporting documentation to the FHWA for their approval.

The Categorical Exclusion determination and the FHWA approval with it are distributed to interdisciplinary units involved in the ADOT Highway Development Process and to applicable public agencies.

### **3.5.3 Location Approval**

FHWA concurrence with a Categorical Exclusion determination is considered federal project environmental approval. Also where no public hearing or an offer for a hearing is required, the concurrence constitutes federal project location approval, except on Secondary Road Plan projects.

For projects requiring a public hearing or an offer for a hearing, the location approval is obtained after the public hearing process has been completed.

### **3.6 Environmental Assessment (EA)**

The Environmental Assessment is prepared for each action that is not a categorical exclusion and does not clearly require the preparation of an EIS or where it is believed an EA would assist in determining the need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). On state federal-aid highway projects, the Environmental Assessment is prepared under the direction of ADOT's Environmental Planning Services, in consultation with the Federal Highway Administration.

On local government federal-aid highway projects, the EA is prepared under the direction of the engineering or planning unit of the local agency, in consultation with the Federal Highway Administration, and the Arizona Department of Transportation.

The EA generally contains the information of the environmental analysis, and in addition, contains the basis by which the environmental recommendation is made for the proposed action and its impacts on the environment.

The EA on a local government federal-aid highway project is approved by the local agency prior to being submitted to ADOT for review and further processing.

The EA should define the scope of the proposed action; determine which aspects of the proposed action have potential for environmental impact; identify measures and alternatives which might mitigate adverse environmental impacts; and identify other environmental review and consultation requirements which should be prepared concurrently with the EA.

Public involvement is part of the highway project development process and is an integral part of the Environmental Assessment. As a result, the EA may be revised to include, as appropriate, public hearing inputs and other comments received regarding the proposed action. Environmental Planning Services of ADOT furnishes FHWA a copy of the revised EA, the public hearing transcripts, copies of any comments received and responses thereto and recommends a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

If, after reviewing the EA and any other appropriate information, the FHWA agrees that the proposed project has no significant impacts, it will make a separate written FONSI, incorporating by reference the EA and any other supporting documentation.

After the EA has been approved by the Federal Highway Administration, the document must be made available for public inspection, in accordance with 23 CFR 771.119e, at appropriate places such as Public Libraries, ADOT and FHWA offices. A notice of availability of the EA, briefly describing the action and its impacts, is sent by ADOT's Environmental Planning Services to the affected units of Federal, State and local government.

However, if the FHWA determines that the action is likely to have a significant impact on the environment, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is required.

### **3.7 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)**

#### **3.7.1 Preparation**

Under direction of the Environmental Planning Services and in consultation with the Federal Highway Administration, a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) is prepared when it is initially determined that the action is likely to cause significant impacts on the environment or when the review of the EA in light of comments received indicates the impacts expected to result from the action may be significant.

After the decision has been made to prepare an EIS, the Federal Highway Administration will issue a Notice of Intent for publication in the Federal Register.

Where required for local government federal-aid highway projects, DEIS's are prepared by the engineering or planning unit of the local agency or by a consultant firm, in consultation with the Federal Highway Administration and the Arizona Department of Transportation.

The DEIS is prepared in compliance with the requirements and provisions of current environmental laws and Executive Orders. It addresses appropriate social, economic and environmental considerations; evaluates all reasonable alternatives to the proposed action and discusses the reasons why other alternatives, which may have been considered, were eliminated from detailed study. The Draft summarizes the studies, reviews, consultations, and coordination as required by federal environmental regulations. The DEIS also contains a summary of early processes such as scoping, meetings with community groups, key issues and pertinent information received from the public and government agencies.

Each Draft Environmental Impact Statement is subject to review of the Environmental Planning Services Manager, and the Chief Deputy State Engineer, Highway Division, ADOT, and is submitted for approval to the Division Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for a local government project is approved by the local agency prior to being submitted to ADOT for review and further processing to FHWA.

### **3.7.2 Circulatory Review**

The FHWA approved Draft Environmental Impact Statement is made available to the public and transmitted to agencies for comment before the document is filed with the Environmental Protection Agency in accordance with 40 CFR1506.9.

The availability of the draft EIS is announced by a notice similar to a public hearing notice as discussed in Part 3.9.5 of this Action Plan. The draft EIS is made available for at least 45 days for review and comments at appropriate locations such as public libraries, FHWA and ADOT's offices.

The DEIS is transmitted to:

1. Public officials, interest groups, and members of the public known to have an interest in the proposed action or the draft EIS.
2. Federal, state and local government agencies expected to have jurisdiction or responsibility over, or interest or expertise in the action.
3. State and Federal land management entities which may be significantly affected by the proposed action or any of the alternatives.

### **3.8 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)**

After circulation of a draft EIS and consideration of comments received, a final EIS is prepared under the direction of the Environmental Planning Services and in consultation with the Federal Highway Administration.

The final EIS identifies the preferred alternative and evaluates all reasonable alternatives considered. It also discusses substantive comments received on the draft EIS and responses thereto; it summarizes public involvement, including a summary of substantial comments received at the public hearing when it is held, and describe the mitigation measures that are to be incorporated into the proposed action.

The Federal Highway Administration reviews the final EIS for compliance with all applicable environmental laws and executive orders. FHWA will indicate approval of the EIS for an action by signing and dating the cover page.

### **3.9 Public Involvement**

#### **3.9.0 General**

The Transportation Planning Process and the Highway Development Process of the Action Plan include opportunities for participation of the public and other agencies.

It is the Arizona Department of Transportation's policy that decisions shall be made in the best overall public interest, and that the public be involved early enough to influence technical studies and final decisions.

Public involvement is an integral part of the environmental impact assessment process by assisting in the compilation of social, economic, and environmental impact assessment data.

Depending on the nature of the scope of work, proposed actions may include publicly advertised meeting, forums, and/or hearings or an offer to hold hearings as appropriate.

Notices are appropriately published in local newspapers advising other agencies and the public as to the availability of the forums, hearings, and environmental documents, and how and where additional project information may be obtained.

Further, appropriate agencies are contacted regarding the proposed project during the preparation of the required corridor planning report and environmental assessment or impact statement.

Neighboring states are contacted by mail, telephone, or personal visit by the appropriate ADOT group(s) during the planning and development processes when Arizona highway projects will have an impact upon or be of interest to adjoining states.

Effort is made to obtain representation and participation of involved minority groups in the Highway Development Processes. Where forums or public hearings are conducted, minority groups are encouraged to participate.

### **3.9.1 The One-Stop Environmental Process**

#### **A. Objectives**

The need for early coordination in the federal-aid highway program has been recognized by the FHWA and ADOT as an essential ingredient of the project development process. Federal and State agencies are consulted early in the preparation of environmental documents and coordinated with continually throughout the processes.

The One-Stop Environmental Process has the following objectives:

1. To the greatest extent possible, prepare a single environmental document to satisfy all environmental and other project-related requirements.
2. To the greatest extent possible, conduct a single public involvement process to satisfy Federal and State requirements.
3. To obtain approvals, permits, licenses and/or clearances from Federal and State agencies during the environmental analysis process or upon the environmental document approval based on information in the single environmental document and from the single public involvement.

#### **B. Scoping**

In order to manage effectively the preparation of the appropriate environmental documents, ADOT recognize the importance of scoping as an open process—that is, what will be covered and in what detail. The process is open to the public and state and local governments, as well as to affected federal agencies.

ADOT's procedures for scoping are part of its public involvement/ public hearing process, as scoping has specific and fairly limited objectives:

- to ensure that real problems are identified early and objectively.
- to identify the affected public and agency concerns.
- to define the issues and alternatives that will be examined in detail in the environmental document.
- to facilitate an efficient process through assembling the cooperating agencies; and ascertaining all the related permits and reviews that must be scheduled concurrently.

Scoping continues throughout the planning for an EIS, and may involve a series of meetings, telephone conversations or written comments from different groups. The scoping process enables early identification of possible serious problems with a proposal, which can be changed or solved because the proposal is still being developed.

There is no required procedure for scoping. However, the following steps have been identified as valuable techniques to help avoid pitfalls and to encourage success:

- 1) Start scoping after enough information is gathered.
- 2) Preparing an information packet, when scoping of the EIS has not been preceded by the preparation of an EA.
- 3) Designing the scoping process for each project
- 4) Issuing the public notice
- 5) Conducting a public meeting
- 6) Analyzing/ processing the comments
- 7) Allocating work assignments and setting schedules.

### ***C. Cooperating Agencies***

The 1978 Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations introduced the concept of lead agency and cooperating agencies. Any agency with jurisdiction by law must be asked to become a cooperating agency. This is because that agency can, by providing its expertise and its jurisdictional authority, prevent the highway project from advancing if it does not agree that the environmental impacts have been completely addressed.

Examples of responsibilities assumed by FHWA and ADOT include, but are not limited to:

- Invite agencies to become cooperating agencies.
- Invite cooperating agencies to scoping and coordination meetings.
- Consult with the cooperating agencies on the type of environmental document to prepare.
- Organize joint field reviews.
- Share project information, including the results of studies.
- Consider conducting joint public involvement activities.
- Give the cooperating agency the opportunity to review pertinent portions of the pre-draft and pre-final environmental documents and technical studies and to express its views on the adequacy of the documents, alternatives considered and the anticipated impacts.
- Permit cooperating agencies to use the environmental document to express their views.

The cooperating agency concept involves teamwork. Sometimes a project will benefit by requesting an agency with special expertise in a particular environmental area to become a cooperating agency.

Cooperating agency's responsibilities include, but are not limited to the following actions:

- Assist in identifying interest groups.
- Attend scoping and coordination meetings and joint field reviews.
- Provide meaningful and early input on issues of concern.
- Participate in joint public involvement activities.
- Review pre-draft and pre-final environmental documents, making sure that the lead agency is informed of any changes needed to reflect the views and concerns of the cooperating agency.
- Perform analyses or write a portion of the environmental document, if requested by the lead agency.
- Adopt the final environmental document if, after an independent review, the cooperating agency concludes that the document satisfies the National Environmental Policy Act requirements.

In such instances, the lead and cooperating agencies make efforts at the beginning of each project to establish ground rules on how the relationship will operate. A fundamental element to an effective ground rule is a mutual understanding of lead agency and cooperating agency responsibilities.

### ***D. Joint Public Hearing***

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) established a policy to cooperate fully in early and continuing coordination during development of projects, environmental documentation, and public involvement process including joint public notices and joint public hearings under 23 CFR771.111(h) and 33 CFR327.

The Corps and FHWA/ADOT have requirements for public involvement which can apply to the same project. Joint public involvement techniques are used to avoid any overlapping activities that can burden the public with independently issued public notices and with the necessity to attend multiple hearings on the same project.

Coordination and consultation among staff of the Corps and FHWA/ ADOT are required for a successful preparation and a conduct of any joint public involvement activity. Joint public notices and hearings must be conducted to meet the public involvement requirements of the Corps, FHWA, as well as ADOT's procedures.

### **3.9.2 Public Participation Process**

#### **A. Determination and Responsibility**

Public forums and hearings are utilized to provide a means for discussion on the need for a project; alternative courses of action; alternative locations and major design features; social, economic, environmental, and other effects of the alternatives; and the consistency of a project with location planning, goals and objectives.

The forum and hearing process may be thought of as having two phases: 1) the informal phase which is to identify issues, goals, objectives, values, etc., 2) the formal phase which is to test conclusions reached in a public forum.

The purpose of the hearing process is to gain public input and to insure that transportation decisions reflect and are consistent with federal, state, and local goals and objectives.

Public participation in the Transportation Planning Process is the responsibility of the Assistant Director, Transportation Planning Division, or his designated staff personnel. Responsibility for public participation for the State Plan Priority Program, Needs Study and corridor studies is delegated to the Deputy Assistant Director for the Planning Program and Support Group.

The State Transportation Board is responsible for advertising and conducting the public hearings required in the adoption process of the ADOT Five-Year Highways Construction Programs.

Determination as to when public forums and/or public hearings are desired or required for state projects in the Highway Development Process is the responsibility of the Deputy State Engineer, Highway Development Group, based upon project information developed in the Transportation Planning and Highway Development processes.

The statutory requirements to adopt public involvement/ public hearing procedures are contained in 23 USC128 and 23 CFR771.111.

Environmental Planning Services of the Highways Division is responsible for planning, advertising, and conducting public forums and hearings required in the Highway Development Process.

When required for local government federal-aid highway projects, the engineering or planning unit of the local agency is responsible for organizing, advertising and conducting its public involvement/ public hearings. These actions are in accordance with ADOT's procedures.

#### **B. Public Forums**

Public forums are informal meetings utilized by ADOT as an optional means of obtaining informal public interaction, response and input on transportation and highway proposals both in the Transportation Planning and Highway Development processes.

Informal meetings also serve to identify, to clarify issues and concerns and to provide prehearing information in order to reduce misunderstanding and conflicts which might arise at the public hearing.

The process for advertising and conducting the forum is similar to that of a public hearing except that the meeting is conducted totally on an informal basis with no official transcript being made of the meeting.

#### **C. Public Hearings**

Public hearings are formal meetings advertised and conducted, or offered, in compliance with state and federal regulations prior to official acceptance or selection of the proposal or plan presented at the hearing.

##### **1. Transportation Planning Process**

Public hearings are required in the Transportation Planning Process prior to adoption of the ADOT Five-Year Transportation Construction Program by the State Transportation Board.



Public hearings used in conjunction with the development of other transportation planning products are conducted by the Transportation Planning Division with assistance from the Highway Development Group of the Highways Division.

## **2. Highway Development Process**

The statutory requirements for affording the opportunity for public hearings on federal-aid projects are contained in 23.U.S.C 128 and 23 CFR 771.111.

At least one public hearing or the offer to hold a public hearing will be provided for any federal-aid highway project that:

- requires a significant amount of new right-of-way;
- substantially changes the layout or function of connecting roadways or the facility being improved;
- has a significant adverse impact on abutting real property;
- otherwise has a significant social, economic, environmental or other effect; or
- is controversial on environmental grounds.
- is processed with an Environmental Impact Statement or Environmental Assessment.

The public hearing is held after the draft EIS or EA has been made available to the public for review.

### **D. Opportunity for Hearing and Withdrawal of Request for Hearing**

If there is reason to believe that the project is noncontroversial and that it is unlikely that a hearing would be requested either by the public or any local agency, a notice of opportunity for a public hearing may be utilized rather than directly scheduling a hearing.

There are occasions when only a small number of requests for a hearing is received. In these instances, it will be permissible to meet with the parties at some convenient location and explain the project and answer any questions. If satisfied, the requesting party may wish to withdraw the request for a hearing in writing. The proceedings will be very carefully documented and made a part of the project record. If the requesting party does not wish to withdraw the request, a hearing will be held.

### **3.9.3 Separate or Combined Hearings**

On more complex and involved projects, separate location and design public hearings may be held or the opportunity, therefore, offered instead of the combined single hearing.

The determination of whether the intent of the public hearing process is best served by combined or separate hearings will be made by the Deputy State Engineer of the Highway Development Group based on the following criteria:

#### **A. Separate Location and Design Hearings**

Separate hearings will be considered when:

- the corridor is exceptionally large;
- there are a large number of alternative locations under consideration;
- there are very intricate and complex designs involved;
- there are large differences in the numbers of relocations for various alternatives; or
- there are other significant complexities.

#### **B. A Combined Hearing**

If it is possible to discuss the proposed location, right-of-way, and design problems in sufficient detail, a combined hearing may be held or offered. Major location and design features of each alternative being studied must be developed to comparable levels of detail.

### **3.9.4 Rehearings**

The validity of the public hearing process is maintained only as long as the conditions surrounding the original hearing(s) remain constant.

A new hearing or offer for hearing may be required whenever there has been:

- substantial change in the proposal, or
- substantial unanticipated development in the area affected by the proposal, or
- an unusually long lapse of time since the last hearing, or
- identification of significant social, economic or environmental effects not previously considered.

### **3.9.5 Public Notification**

#### **A. General**

Public notices are published as a means to inform the public of various proposals and to invite public participation.

Various methods of public notifications which may be used as appropriate are:

- the normal paid hearing notices
- supplemental news releases and special paid notices
- flyers or bulk rate circulars distributed to residents
- notices on bulletin boards in public places such as city halls, libraries, supermarkets, etc.
- television and radio
- distribution of notices through schools and service clubs
- indication in the draft environmental document that a hearing will be held.

In all cases where non-English-speaking people are affected by the proposal, the Deputy State Engineer, Highway Development Group, will determine if the language barrier is of such magnitude as to warrant special publicity in the language of those affected.

#### **B. Paid Hearing Notices**

Each notice shall:

- be published at least twice in a newspaper having a general circulation in the vicinity of the proposal or in any newspaper having a substantial circulation in the area concerned, such as foreign language and community newspaper. The first notice shall be published at least 15 days prior to the scheduled hearing or the deadline for requesting the hearing. The second notice should be published approximately one week before the hearing or deadline. The timing of additional publications is optional.
- include sufficient detail of the surrounding area to enable the reader to readily identify the proposal location.
- include an appropriate schematic map depicting the proposal limits. Alternative major design features are to be either displayed by schematic inserts or described in the text of the notice.
- state that maps, drawings, the Draft Environmental Assessment or Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and other pertinent information received and/or developed by ADOT will be available for inspection and copying at the nearest ADOT District Office or some other convenient location in the vicinity of the proposal. Also the public hearing notice should make reference to any significant floodplain encroachments, right-of-way acquisitions and historic preservation impacts.

In addition to the required information, any other data that will make the notice more informative should be included, such as using maps and sketches to indicate the location of the hearing site.

- be mailed to appropriate news media and to city, county, state and federal agencies involved in or known to be interested in the proposal.

The notice may also be mailed to those other groups, agencies, or individuals who by nature of their function, interest, or responsibility may be interested in or affected by the proposal. Particular effort will be made to seek out and invite minority leaders and representatives of low-mobility groups. In lieu of sending the notice, a letter containing the pertinent data can be sent.

To ensure notification of the above, Environmental Planning Services establishes and maintains a list upon which a federal agency, local official, public advisory group or agency, civic association, community group, or individual may enroll to receive notices of a specific proposal.

Each notice of public hearing shall specify the date, time, and place of the hearing.

When a public hearing is held, the EIS or Environmental Assessment shall be available at the public hearing and for a minimum of fifteen days in advance of the public hearing. The notice of the public hearing in local newspapers shall announce the availability of the environmental document and where information concerning the proposed action may be obtained.

On projects of particular local interest or great complexity, Environmental Planning Services may consider the use of bulk rate-type circulars in addition to the published notices.

### **3.10 Hearing Procedures**

Public hearing are to be held at a place and time convenient for persons affected by the proposal.

Whether a hearing is conducted by representatives of ADOT or of a cooperating agency, ADOT will arrange to have suitable personnel available to be responsive to questions which arise and will be responsible for successful completion of all hearing requirements.

At each public hearing, the following information is presented as appropriate:

- The project's alternatives, and major design features. Each alternative should be briefly described using maps or other visual aids such as photographs, drawings, or sketches to help explain the various alternatives. The material presented should provide a clear understanding of each alternative's termini, location, costs, right-of-way requirements etc.
- The social, economic, environmental, and other impacts of the project,
- The relocation assistance program and the right-of-way acquisition process.
- The Arizona Department of Transportation's procedures for receiving both oral and written statements from the public.
- Notice that no studies or plans will be finalized until the complete public record has been analyzed including data gathered at the public hearing and comments received in response to the circulation of the draft environmental document.
- Notice that written inputs and comments may be submitted to the Arizona Department of Transportation within fifteen days after the public hearing.

### **3.11 Record of Public Hearing**

Whenever a formal public hearing is held, a Transcript of Public Hearing will be prepared to provide documentation of the proceedings. Copies of the transcript and written statements are transmitted to the Federal Highway Administration. Based on the analysis and reevaluation of project environmental documents, the FHWA and the ADOT will determine whether changes in the project warrant additional public involvement.

### **3.12 Community Relations Office**

Included in the organizational structure of the Arizona Department of Transportation is the Community Relations Office of the Director's staff.

The primary function of this office is to collect and to distribute to appropriate groups within the Department, transportation news articles and other public information of interest to ADOT and to disseminate to the news media and the public news and information regarding ADOT transportation planning studies, proposals, public forums and hearings, etc., of general interest to the public.

Persons desiring additional information regarding any ADOT transportation proposal or project may make inquiry at the Community Relations Office of the Arizona Department of Transportation, 206 South 17th Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85007.

If the nature of the desired information requires additional consideration, the Community Relations Office will forward the inquiry to the appropriate division or group in the Department for reply.

Interested persons may also make inquiry for transportation information at the appropriate ADOT highway district office within their respective area of the state or their State Transportation Board member.

### **3.13 Establish Project Right of Way Limits**

Establishing the right of way limits along the Corridor occurs at the earliest practicable time during or at the conclusion of the Project Location process.

The Right of Way Section will prepare and process a resolution for adoption by the Transportation Board which will amend any previously determined Corridor limits and establish the right of way limits, as required.

### **3.14 Major Approval Decisions**

#### **3.14.1 Right of Way Decision**

After the alignment has been selected on a highway project involving federal-aid funds for Right-of-Way Acquisition, the Chief Right-of-Way Agent of the Right-of-Way Section determines whether federal-aid advance right-of-way acquisition (for bonafide hardship or protective purposes only) is necessary. This determination may be made by local authority in local public agency projects.

Such federal-aid advance right-of-way acquisition requires prior approval of the Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation and the Division Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

On highway projects where no federal-aid funds are involved in the right of way acquisition, the state may commence normal acquisition functions at this point with prior approval of the Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation. Local public agencies require only local approval to commence normal acquisition.

#### **3.14.2 Project Approval**

##### **A. Project Processed Under the Secondary Road Plan**

##### **1. Environmental Approval**

Written FHWA notification of acceptance of the environmental document and public hearing certifications will be deemed as federal environmental approval of the highway project.

##### **2. Location and Design Approvals**

On federal-aid highway projects processed under the ADOT Secondary Road Plan, the Arizona Department of Transportation is responsible for granting project location and design approvals on behalf of the Federal Highway Administration on both state and local government federal-aid highway projects.

Location and design decisions made on local government highway projects by the local agency authority are submitted to the Local Government Services of the Urban Highway Section, of the ADOT Highways Division for review and approval.

The location decisions for local government projects, and the location recommendations of ADOT's Location Services staff on state highway projects, are subject to the approval of the Chief Location Engineer, Location Services; the Assistant State Engineer, Highway Location Section and the Deputy State Engineer, Highway Development Group. Final location approval of state highway projects rests with the Assistant Director, Highways Division, or his designee. The design decisions and the design recommendations of ADOT's Design Section staff on state highway projects, are subject to the approval of the Plans Engineer, Highway Plans Services; the Assistant State Engineer, Highway Design Section; and the Deputy State Engineer, Highway Development Group. Final design approval for state highway projects rests with the Assistant Director, Highways Division, or his designee.

The design decisions for Local Government federal-aid highway projects are subject to approval of the Transportation Engineer Supervisor, Local Government Services, Urban Highway Section of the Highway Development Group.

Written notification of ADOT project location and design approval is processed through the Deputy State Engineer, Highway Development Group, to appropriate ADOT units or the involved local government for further project development in accordance with the priority schedule with the respective agency.

## **B. Project Not Processed Under the Secondary Road Plan**

### **1. Reports and Certifications**

For all federal-aid highway projects not being processed under provisions of ADOT's Secondary Road Plan, the following reports and certifications will be submitted to FHWA by the appropriate ADOT units to obtain federal project environmental and location approval:

- for projects requiring the formal public hearing process, a certification that a hearing was held or an opportunity for a hearing was afforded; or that all requests for a public hearing were withdrawn by the requesting party(s);
- for projects on which formal public hearings are held, a copy of the hearing transcript along with a copy of any written comments received.
- where appropriate, a Location Concept Report and/or a Design Concept Report; and,
- appropriate environmental documentation for each federal-aid highway project.

### **2. Environmental and Location Approval**

Written FHWA notification of acceptance of the environmental document and public hearing certifications as appropriate will be deemed as federal environmental and location approval of the highway project.

The notification of FHWA acceptance is processed through the Deputy State Engineer, Highway Development Group, to appropriate ADOT units or the involved local government for further project development in accordance with the priority schedule within the respective agency.

### **3. Design Approval**

For federal-aid highway projects not processed under the Secondary Road Plan, federal design approval is obtained after the environmental and location approval process is complete.

For state highway projects, a design memorandum is prepared by the ADOT Highway Plans Services of the Highway Development Group requesting federal project design approval based upon the Design Concept Report, where applicable.

For Local Government federal-aid highway projects, the Design Memorandum and the request for design approval are prepared by the local agency or its consultant and after local approval are submitted to the Transportation Engineer Supervisor, Local Government Services, Urban Highway Section of the Highway Development group.

The Design Memorandum will contain a discussion of any project design changes occurring after publication of the Design Concept Report and will indicate the final design alternate selected by the agency, as appropriate.

The Design Memorandum for state highway projects is subject to the review of the Plans Engineer, Highway Plans Services, and the approval of the Transportation Engineer Supervisor, Local Government Services, Urban Highway Section of the Highway Development Group.

The Design Memorandum for Local Government federal-aid highway projects is subject to the review and approval of the Transportation Engineer Supervisor, Local government Services, Urban Highway Section of the Highway Development Group.

The ADOT approved Design Memorandum and the request for federal design approval are submitted by the respective ADOT Section to the Federal Highway Administration.

Written FHWA notification of acceptance of the Design Memorandum will be considered federal design approval for the highway project.

The written FHWA notification of acceptance is processed through the Deputy State Engineer, Highway Development Group, to involved ADOT units and the appropriate local government for further project development in accordance with the priority schedule of the respective agency.

Certain projects, because of their limited size or scope do not normally warrant a design memorandum. The submittal of the final Plans, Specification, and Estimate (P.S. & E) to FHWA will be considered as the request for design approval. The FHWA letter of authorization will be considered as the Federal Highway Administration design approval for this category of projects.

### **3.15 Project Design (Step 10)**

This phase of the Highway Development Process occurs after ADOT project location and design concept approvals have been given.

The functions of Step 10, the design Phase for a state highway facility, are generally performed by the Arizona Department of Transportation or its consultant. However, with prior approval (normally accomplished by written agreement) of the Arizona Department of Transportation, a local government (or its consultant) may be permitted to perform the functions of this phase for a state highway facility in accordance with this Action Plan. All such construction plans must meet design standards of ADOT and shall be presented to the Arizona Department of Transportation for the same approval process as plans prepared by ADOT or its consultant, as identified in this Action Plan. Final decisions for state highway facilities are the statutory responsibility of the Arizona Department of Transportation and the State Transportation Board as provided for in Title 28 of the Arizona Revised Statutes, as amended.

#### **3.15.1 Preliminary Construction Plans**

Preliminary Construction Plans for ADOT highway projects are prepared under direction of Highway Plans Services, Design Section, of the ADOT Highway Development Group. This function may include interdisciplinary services and data as necessary from the Design Section, other ADOT units, state, federal, and local agencies, and from consultants as appropriate.

Preliminary Construction Plans are prepared for the proposed highway project based upon data contained in the Location, Design, and the Environmental document(s), and any other pertinent project documents prepared earlier in the Highway Development Process, and from the public involvement process where applicable.

### **3.15.2 Parallel Functions**

While the Preliminary Construction Plans are being prepared, several other major functions are also begun, as appropriate, by various interdisciplinary groups involved in the Highway Development Process, as typified by the following:

- \* Major Structure Plan
- \* Normal Right-of-Way Acquisition and Clearances
- \* Relocation Assistance Procedures
- \* Traffic Plan
- \* Highway Beautification and Roadside Development Plan
- \* Public Utility Relocation and Clearances
- \* Preparation of Materials Design Memorandum
- \* Others as may be required

### **3.15.3 Materials Design Memorandum**

A materials memo is prepared by Pavement Services of the ADOT Materials Section, Operations Group, which identifies materials recommendations for design and construction of the project. The materials memo is used as source data in preparation of the preliminary and final construction plans by the Design Section.

### **3.15.4 Office and/or Field Review**

When the Preliminary Construction Plans have reached a sufficient level of development, the Highway Plans Engineer, ADOT Design Section, determines whether a field and/or office review will be held for a project. On projects where the review is warranted by complex design or other features, the Highway Plans Engineer or designee schedules an appropriate office and/or field review and notifies all involved groups and agencies of the time and place of the review.

The Preliminary Construction Plans are finalized to include initial design requirements and features as appropriate from the parallel functions and from the office and/or field review(s) as applicable.

All Preliminary Construction Plans are subject to the review of the appropriate section or service manager within the ADOT Highway Development Group, and the approval of the Deputy State Engineer, Highway Development Group, or his designee.

Notice of approval of the Preliminary Construction Plans is made through the Deputy State Engineer, Highway Development Group, or a designee, to all appropriate units.

### **3.15.5 Utilities Considerations**

During preparation of the Preliminary Construction Plans for the project, the Utility and Railroad Engineering Services of the ADOT Design Section develops information regarding all utilities located within the project area. This information is utilized in development of the project plans and is reviewed during subsequent plans review stages.

Coordination with all involved utility companies on the project is maintained by the Utility and Railroad Engineering Services which is eventually consummated in utility agreements between the utilities located within the construction area of the project.

### **3.15.6 Final Construction Plans**

Final Construction Plans are prepared from approved Preliminary Construction Plans, under the direction of ADOT Highway Plans Services.

All parallel functions started previously, as discussed above, are finalized during this phase of the Highway Development Process. These final documents are approved by the appropriate unit engineer or manager and, where appropriate, are incorporated into the Final Construction Plans.

Where warranted by complex design features or related problems of the proposed highway project, the ADOT Highway Plans Engineer may schedule and conduct an office or field review of the Final Construction Plans. Such review when conducted includes personnel from the various disciplines and agencies of the Highway Development Process for the particular project.

All Final Construction Plans are subject to the acceptance of the Highway Plans Engineer of ADOT Highway Plans Services and to the approval of the Deputy State Engineer, Highway Development Group.

The approved Final Construction Plans are submitted by the Deputy State Engineer, Highway Development Group, to the Contracts and Specifications Services of the ADOT Design Section for preparation of the Specifications and Estimates for the proposed project.

#### **3.15.7 Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E)**

Written specifications and construction estimates are prepared and incorporated together with the Final Construction plans into a Plans, Specifications, and Estimates (PS&E) package by Contracts and Specifications Services. The final PS&E package is reviewed to assure that environmental mitigations and other requirements as previously determined have been incorporated.

#### **3.15.8 Approval**

The completed PS&E documents are subject to the acceptance of the Engineer, Contracts and Specifications Services, and the approval of the Deputy State Engineer of the Highway Development Group and the Chief Deputy State Engineer on behalf of the Assistant Director, ADOT Highways Division.

#### **3.16 Right-of-Way Acquisition (Step 11)**

The Right-of-Way Section of the Highway Development Group in the Highway Division is responsible for the coordination and processing of all right of way matters. The flow process chart on page 59 depicts the overall key functions performed by the Right of Way Section in accordance with requirements of volumes 6 and 7 of the federal-aid Highway Program Manual.

Except when the right-of-way functions are carried out by ADOT or a contracting consultant, local public agencies usually assign responsibility for coordination and processing of right-of-way matters to the Engineering Department or to a separate real estate or Property Management Department of the local agency. Local agency right of way related activities on federal-aid highway projects are monitored by the Right of Way Section of ADOT.

The Right of Way Section participates in the interdisciplinary activities occurring in the transportation planning and the highway development processes and in the public forum and hearing process conducted by Environmental Planning Services.

##### **3.16.1 Advance Acquisition**

Advance acquisition may only occur in relation to those points as previously discussed in Part 2.8 (step 8) and must be accomplished in compliance with the requirements of Arizona Revised Statutes and Federal Regulations.

When there is no federal-aid involved in right of way costs, advance acquisition may be carried out by a local public agency after an approved route plan has been adopted by the governing board of the agency. If federal funds are participating in right of way costs, advance acquisition must be specifically authorized on a parcel-by-parcel basis by the Federal Highway Administration.

##### **3.16.2 Normal Acquisition**

Normal acquisition is any acquisition other than "Advance Acquisition for bonafide protective or hardship purposes" and can be authorized after appropriate project design approval has been given.



All state acquisition must have approval of the Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation. Local agency acquisitions are approved by the authorized local official. Where federal-aid funds are involved, both state and local public agency acquisitions must be authorized by the Division Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

Where federal aid funds are not involved in right-of-way costs but are participating in other phases of the project, ADOT and the local governments still must comply with the provisions of The Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 and amendments.

### **3.16.3 Relocation Assistance Program**

The Relocation Assistance Program of the Arizona Department of Transportation is established to operate in conjunction with, and is governed by, the Federal Relocation Assistance Program instituted by the U.S. Department of Transportation in accordance with Public law 91-646, Chapter 49, Code of Federal Regulations.

Sections 28-1841 through 28-1853 of Arizona Revised Statutes provide for implementation of the Federal Relocation Assistance Program on a state level. Local public agencies are authorized to perform relocation assistance activities by ARS 11-961 through 11-973.

The ADOT Highway Development Process flow chart at the end of this Action Plan identifies the various points of the process at which the Right of Way Section may be involved.

All relocation actions and the payment of relocation assistance for eligible recipients of the state program must be approved by the Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation. Local agency actions are approved by the authorized local official. When federal funds are used in relocation costs, both state and local agency relocation activities must have prior authorization of the Division Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

On local government federal-aid highway construction projects where no federal-aid funds are used in relocation, the relocation activities and payments must be approved by the local authority and will be monitored by ADOT Right of Way personnel, as well as FHWA.

### **3.17 Advertising for Bid (Step 12)**

Upon authorization of the ADOT Assistant Director, Highways Division, the project is advertised for bid in accordance with state law by the Contracts and Specifications Services of the ADOT Highway Design Section.

An advertisement for bid contains the location and description of the proposed work, the person(s) to contact for project plans and information, the closing date and instructions for submitting bids to ADOT, and the scheduled bid-opening date. Other pertinent information may be included for the project.

A time period of thirty calendar days is normally allowed for preparation of bids. A longer period may be allowed on complex projects and a shorter time may be permitted for minor projects such as seal coats, overlays, and other similar types of projects.

#### **3.17.1 Establishing the Lowest Bid**

All elements of each bid received for the project within the authorized time limit are verified by the Contracts and Specifications Services to determine the lowest qualified bid.

A staff recommendation regarding award of the contract is made to the ADOT Assistant Director, Highways Division.

### **3.18 Award of Contract (Step 13)**

The ADOT Assistant Director of the Highways Division in consultation with the Director makes a recommendation to the State Transportation Board regarding the award of contract.

When a contract is to be awarded, the State Transportation Board at an open public meeting will make the award to the lowest qualified bidder. The State Transportation Board reserves the right to table or reject the award of contract.

When a contract is not to be awarded for a state highway project, the State Transportation Board determines what future action is to be taken with regard to the project.

### **3.19 Construction (Step 14)**

After the contract is awarded the contractor is responsible for constructing the project in accordance with the terms, conditions, and provisions set forth in the contract.

Contract administration, construction surveillance, and work inspection for the project is furnished by ADOT through the appropriate District Engineer's staff in conjunction with the Construction Engineering staff of the ADOT Highway Operations Group in the Highways Division.

Qualified local agencies may request approval from FHWA and ADOT to self administer the construction inspection portion of the local government contracts.

### **3.20 Project Acceptance (Step 15)**

Final inspection and acceptance of the completed project is the responsibility of the District Engineer in whose district the project is located, or his designee.

The Project Acceptance function concludes the ADOT Action Plan process and procedures. However, certain other functions within the Arizona Department of Transportation continue through and beyond the project construction stage.

While being generally beyond the scope and requirements of the ADOT Action Plan, these functions nevertheless may contribute significantly to the enhancement of the transportation facility and the surrounding environment.

Example of some of these functions include:

- appropriate application of roadside landscaping schemes and techniques to enhance and preserve the aesthetic values of the corridor;
- soil erosion evaluation and control;
- water pollution evaluation and water preservation where appropriate;
- adequate maintenance of highway facilities to provide maximum user benefits;
- continuing research to improve the quality and use of the highway construction materials;
- on-going research to implement improved safety features in highway planning, construction, and operation; and
- other similar programs and functions as may be applicable.

The functions and procedures outlined in this Action Plan together with the many other functions as typified by the above examples provide the planning, engineering, and administrative methods with which the Arizona Department of Transportation meets its statutory responsibilities regarding highways, roads, and streets on the state system.

### **3.21 Monitoring Completed Projects**

With the official awarding of the highway construction contract, the Systems Planning, Location and Design phases of the ADOT Action are completed.

The final function of the ADOT Action Plan process is the environmental monitoring of selected, completed federal-aid highway actions, constructed under provisions of the Action Plan.

The monitoring process for federal-aid highway projects is accomplished by ADOT's Environmental Planning Services in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration. The monitoring includes the social, economic and environmental reevaluation of completed highway projects constructed in environmentally sensitive areas.

Conclusions and/or recommendations resulting from the project monitoring process are distributed to interdisciplinary units of the Highway Development Process for reference and for use in planning and designing future highway projects where applicable.

Monitoring the social, economic and environmental effects of completed local government federal-aid projects and the distribution of resultant project data to involved interdisciplinary units or groups is the responsibility of the respective local agency.

This final function concludes the ADOT Action plan process and procedures. Functions and procedures outlined in this Action Plan, together with many other functions provide the planning, engineering and administrative methods with which the Arizona Department of Transportation and the local governments within Arizona meet their statutory responsibilities regarding highways, roads and streets under the Federal-Aid Highway Programs.

## APPENDIX A

The following actions meet the criteria for a Categorical Exclusion determination and normally do not require any further National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) approvals by the Federal Highway Administration.

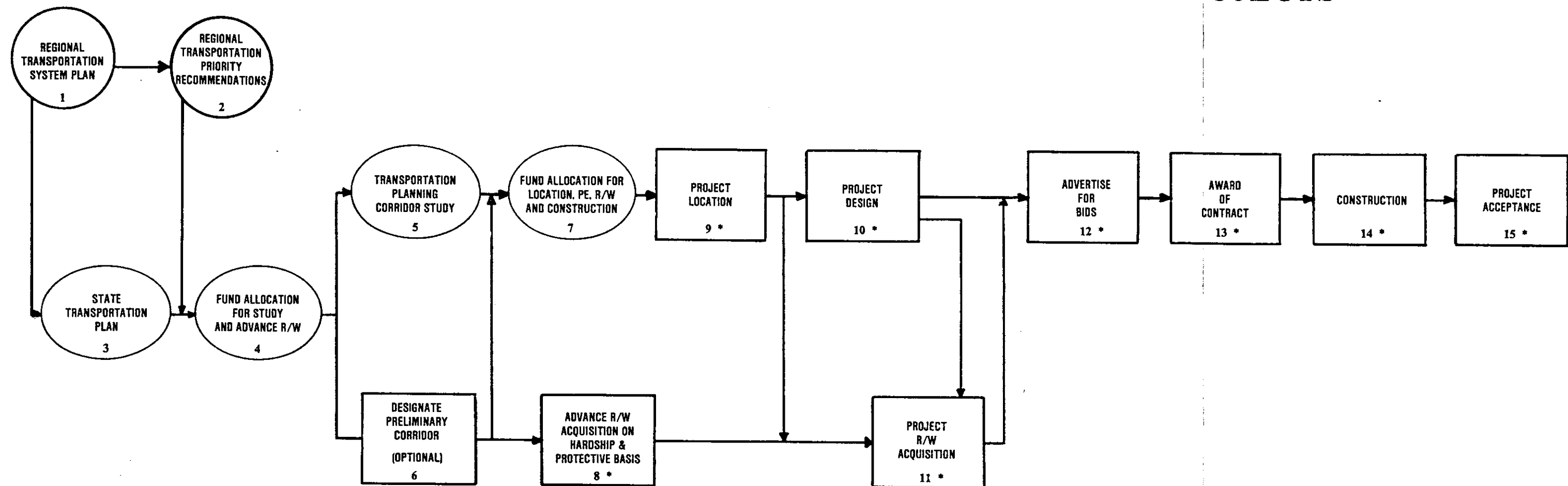
1. Activities which do not involve or lead directly to construction, such as planning and technical studies; grants for training and research programs; research activities as defined in 23 U.S.C. 307; approval of a unified work program and any findings required in the planning process pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 134; approval of statewide programs under 23 CFR Part 630; approval of project concepts under 23 CFR Part 476; engineering to define the elements of a proposed action or alternatives so that social, economic, and environmental effects can be assessed; and Federal-aid system revisions which establish classes of highways on the Federal-aid highway system.
2. Approval of utility installations along or across a transportation facility.
3. Construction of bicycle and pedestrian lanes, paths, and facilities.
4. Activities included in the State's "highway safety plan" under 23 U.S.C. 402.
5. Transfer of Federal lands pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 317 when the subsequent action is not an FHWA action.
6. The installation of noise barriers or alterations to existing publicly owned buildings to provide for noise reduction.
7. Landscaping.
8. Installation of fencing, signs, pavement markings, small passenger shelters, traffic signals, and railroad warning devices where no substantial land acquisition or traffic disruption will occur.
9. Emergency repairs under 23 U.S.C. 125.
10. Acquisition of scenic easements.
11. Determination of payback under 23 CFR Part 480 for property previously acquired with Federal-aid participation.
12. Improvements to existing rest areas and truck weigh stations.
13. Ridesharing activities.
14. Bus and rail car rehabilitation.
15. Alterations to facilities or vehicles in order to make them accessible for elderly and handicapped persons.
16. Program administration, technical assistance activities, and operating assistance to transit authorities to continue existing service or increase service, to meet routine changes in demand.
17. The purchase of vehicles by the applicant where the use of these vehicles can be accommodated by existing facilities or by new facilities which themselves are within a Categorical Exclusion (CE).
18. Track and rail bed maintenance and improvements when carried out within the existing right-of-way.
19. Purchase and installation of operating or maintenance equipment to be located within the transit facility and with no significant impacts off the site.
20. Promulgation of rules, regulations, and directives. (d) Additional actions which meet the criteria for a Categorical Exclusion (CE) in the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1508.4) and paragraph (a) of this section may be designated as CE's only after the Federal Highway Administration's approval.

## APPENDIX B

Group Two Categorical Exclusion actions require NEPA documentation on a case-by-case basis to demonstrate that criteria for CE's are satisfied, and that significant environmental effects will not result. Examples of such actions include but are not limited to:

- Modernization of a highway by resurfacing, restoration, rehabilitation, reconstruction, adding shoulders, or adding auxiliary lanes (e.g., parking, weaving, turning, climbing).
- Highway safety or traffic operations improvement projects including the installation of ramp metering control devices and lighting.
- Bridge rehabilitation, reconstruction or replacement or the construction of grade separation to replace existing at-grade railroad crossings.
- Transportation corridor fringe parking facilities.
- Construction of new truck weigh stations or rest areas.
- Approvals for disposal of excess right-of-way for joint or limited use of right-of-way, where the proposed use does not have significant adverse impacts.
- Approvals for changes in access control.
- Construction of new bus storage and maintenance facilities in areas used predominantly for industrial or transportation purposes where such construction is not inconsistent with existing zoning and located on or near a street with adequate capacity to handle anticipated bus and support vehicle traffic.
- Rehabilitation or reconstruction of existing rail and bus buildings and ancillary facilities where only minor amounts of additional land are required and there is not a substantial increase in the number of users.
- Construction of bus transfer facilities (an open area consisting of passenger shelters, boarding areas, kiosks and related street improvements) when located in a commercial area or other high activity center in which there is adequate street capacity for projected bus traffic.
- Construction of rail storage and maintenance facilities in areas used predominantly for industrial or transportation purposes where such construction is not inconsistent with existing zoning and there is no significant noise impact on the surrounding community.
- Acquisition of land for hardship or protective purposes; advance land acquisition loans under section 3(b) of the UMT Act. Hardship and protective buying will be permitted only for a particular parcel or a limited number of parcels. These types of land acquisition qualify for a CE only where the acquisition will not limit the evaluation of alternatives, including shifts in alignment for planned construction projects, which may be required in the NEPA process. No project development on such land may proceed until the NEPA process has been completed.

# ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FLOW PROCESS FOR FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY PROJECTS



## PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY

- Regional or Local Agency
- Transportation Planning Division
- Highways Division

NOTE: 1 - Step 1 through 15 are discussed in greater details in chapter 2 and 3 of this Action Plan.

2 - Major projects such as new highways on new locations may require all of the process steps identified above. Less complex projects such as the improvement or reconstruction of existing facilities may require only selected steps of the process as applicable to the individual project.

3 - Project Location includes the environmental analysis.

\* FHWA approvals required, except for project under the Secondary Road Plan

ENVIRONMENTAL FLOW CHART FOR  
FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY PROJECTS

